

REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough examination of the present application as evidenced by the Office Action of October 6, 2003 (hereinafter "Office Action").

Applicants especially appreciate the indication that dependent Claims 9, 22, 37, and 49 recite patentable subject matter. In response, to advance prosecution and to facilitate an early allowance of the present application, Applicants have amended Claim 1 by incorporating recitations from Claims 4 and 9, amended Claim 17 by incorporating recitations from Claim 22, amended Claim 25 by incorporating recitations from Claims 32 and 37, and amended Claim 44 by incorporating recitations from Claim 49. Accordingly, Claims 4, 9, 22, 32, 37, and 49 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and various dependent claims have been amended in light of the cancellation of Claims 4, 9, 22, 32, 37, and 49. In addition, Claim 16 has been amended to delete the reference to a communications system, which lacks antecedent basis, and Claims 39 and 50 - 52 have been amended to correct antecedent basis errors.

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CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the above-entitled application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (919) 854-1400.

It is not believed that an extension of time and/or additional fee(s)-including fees for net addition of claims-are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. In the event, however, that an extension of time is necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such an extension is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a). Any additional fees believed to be due in connection with this paper may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 50-0220.

Respectfully submitted,



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